

K-65

The Palmer House, Rock of Ages
532 High Street, Chestertown
c.1782

The Palmer House stands on the northwestern half of Lot No. 62 in Chestertown. The entire lot had been sold by Simon Wilmer (II) to Joseph Everett for @10 prior to August 10, 1737. On that date Wilmer entered into a sale of the same lot to Joseph's two sons and heirs, St. Leger and Abraham.¹

Abraham received the northwest half of lot No. 62 and kept it until 1756, when he and his wife Margaret transferred it to Mary Stanton for @20.² Mary's daughter, Sarah and her husband Henry Hynson of Queen Annes County sold the lot to John Palmer for @75 in 1782.³

Palmer built the existing three bay stone structure over a full basement. Either contemporarily or soon thereafter, the space between it and the Hopkins House to the west was filled with a stone wing having the same roof line. Old photos of the house show a room at ground level with a window above, and a small dormer on the back of the roof. This structure was probably a kitchen wing and access from the main house was probably gained via a door where the present west window is located. The presence of brick down to the second floor level in the west gable might be explained by the fact that the kitchen fireplace was connected to the main flue and the irregularities were left when the wing was removed after 1903. After the old kitchen was removed, a frame leanto was added on the back of the house.

John Palmer sold the house and lot in 1811 to his son Edward for @200 (\$533.50 is also stated in the deed).⁴ Edward was in the same year the

administrator of his neighbor's estate (Elizabeth Hopkins Pope). At the public sale of Pope's personal property, John Palmer purchased several items.⁵ Both John and Edward were heirs of Mrs. Pope, receiving \$540.79 3/4 each.⁶

Apparently Edward sold the property to Thomas Edwards without recording the deed. After Thomas Edwards' death, the chancery court ordered the property be sold to William Sappington, which was recorded in 1836.⁷

The 1841 Tax Assessment lists Sappington residing on Lot No. 62 with "Buildings in tolerable Repair" and as owning two houses on part of lot No. 89 and a blacksmith shop occupied by William Webb and G. Usilton in bad repair. Both properties were valued at \$700.00.⁸

1. Land Records, Lib. 4, fol. 709 (for St. Leger Everett see "Big Meadow").
2. Land Records, Lib. 8, fol. 28.
3. Land Records, Lib. EF 6, fol. 112.
4. Land Records, Lib. BC 6, fol. 358.
5. Inventories, Lib. 12, fol. 507.
6. Administrative Accts, Lib. 13, fol. 23.
7. Land Records, Lib. JNG 4, fol. 251.
8. The house is also known as "Rock of Ages" and is depicted on the Silver Service which once graced the officers dining table on the USS the service is now on display at the State House, Annapolis.

K-65 Rock of Ages or Palmer House
532 W. High St.
Chestertown

private residence

This dwelling is unusual in the Chestertown area as stones this size are not found here. Legend states that they were brought in ships as ballast to the then thriving port of Chestertown. Rock of Ages is a small $1\frac{1}{2}$ storey modest home with most pleasing proportions.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

1506652204

K-65

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC Rock of Ages or Palmer House

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

532 W. High St.

CITY, TOWN

Chestertown

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Md.

COUNTY

Kent

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

___DISTRICT

☒BUILDING(S)

___STRUCTURE

___SITE

___OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

___PUBLIC

☒PRIVATE

___BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

___IN PROCESS

___BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒OCCUPIED

___UNOCCUPIED

___WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

___YES: RESTRICTED

___YES: UNRESTRICTED

☒NO

PRESENT USE

___AGRICULTURE

___COMMERCIAL

___EDUCATIONAL

___ENTERTAINMENT

___GOVERNMENT

___INDUSTRIAL

___MILITARY

___MUSEUM

___PARK

☒PRIVATE RESIDENCE

___RELIGIOUS

___SCIENTIFIC

___TRANSPORTATION

___OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Jean Patrick Kendall

Telephone #: none listed

STREET & NUMBER

I assume 532 W. High St.

CITY, TOWN

Chestertown

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Md. 21620

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the Clerk

Liber #: EHP 31

Folio #: 67 & 71

STREET & NUMBER

Kent County Court House

CITY, TOWN

Chestertown

STATE

Md.

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

none known

DATE

___FEDERAL ___STATE ___COUNTY ___LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

K-65

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Rock of Ages is so titled because of it being constructed of large stones, which local legend says were brought over to this country as ballast in ships. Local legend also says a Captain Palmer brought them over and built the house in the late 17th century, however Palmers owned the house from 1782 to about 1830s. Indeed Palmer may have built the house but not in the 1600s!

The house is 1½ storey, of stone construction, painted white with green trim. It is 3 bays wide with a central door with plain molding being flanked by 2 6/6 double hung shuttered windows. There is a small porch surrounding the front entrance. Beneath the first floor windows are 2 low cellar windows. On the A roof, of tar paper shingles are 3 6/6 double hung windows in pedimented dormers. The east side is solid stone construction with the chimney which is within the wall being of brick above the middle of the wall. The cornice turns onto the side facade and returns, both in front and back, and the bargeboard is plain. The west facade has a similar chimney arrangement as the east, however at the first floor level in the rear there is a 6/6 double hung shuttered window.

A frame additon has been added to the rear and neighbors who have been in the house say the stairway which was originally circling the chimney on the east end has been removed and there is now a central stairway. Also there is reported to be very little woodwork, etc. inside.

In F.G. Usilton's History of Kent County there is a photo of the "Palmer House" with 4 flat headed dormers, 6/6, on the rear.

As with other brick houses in this block the water table is only on the front facade and rises to the level of the base of the front door.

The western most gable was destroyed sometime after 1903. It is still shown on the 1903 Sanborn Insurance Map, p. 6. This gable directly abutted 536 High St. Viewing from l to r it contained a door near the far left which appears from the remaining photo to be stepped down to get into a lowered room, which was definitely the kitchen. There is also a window on the same level with the door and above the door is a small window. The chimney presently in the west gable was there and thus was within the house. It appears from the old photo that 536 High and Rock of Ages shared a chimney.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

K-65

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES mid to late 1700s

BUILDER/ARCHITECT unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Rock of Ages, or the Palmer House, as it is locally called, is the only house constructed of stone in this area. Stones of this size are not found here and legend has it that they were carried to Chestertown as ballast in ships by a Captain Palmer. It is characteristic of small modest 1½ storey houses of the period, being unusual because of its stone construction.

The proportions are pleasing and there has not been much alteration of the exterior.

Again, local legend has this house built by Capt. Palmer in the late 1600s, however, no Palmer owned the property until 1782 and it is not constructed as a house of any earlier period than the mid to late 1700s.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

K-65

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCESF.G. Usilton's History of Kent County

Alsberg, Henry G., p. 408 of American Guide Series, 1949 on Md.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

(*at a point 522.4 nw from east building line of Kent St.)

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning for the same the notherly building line on High St. as mentioned in a deed of 1/3/20 APR 6/123 * see above at a point S 41 35 min. E 6' from southern most corner of 536 High and running N 47 5 min. E 86' more or less to a point on the line of other lands of said Jean Patrick Kendall, now marked by a wire fence.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE this is all it says - assume it must return by same bounds. COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Kathleen B. White, Historic Site SurveyorOct. 1976

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Md. Historical Trust/City of Chestertown

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

"Rock of Ages"

K - 65

532 W. High St., Chestertown

EHP 31/ 67 & 71
10/28/68

Edith J. Patrick, widow, Wilbur T. Patrick, Jr.
Flora May Patrick, wife to Jean Patrick Kendall,
(nee Gsell)

declaratory decrees 9/24/68 Kent County Circuit
Court, Equity #5097, Jean P. Kendall vs. Wilbur
T. Patrick Sr., et als. to settle division line
between 532 and 536. "all that lot, part of a
lot, piece or parcel of land situate, lying and
being southeasterly from and binding on the true
division line between", 532 and 536.

Will
ERB 4/217 5/18/61

Hallie Cooper Simpson to cousin Jean Gsell.
Other cousin, Wilbur T. Patrick Sr. died intestate
5/3/68 and 536 goes to his heirs. Obviously
some contest over properties here within family.

Will
WPT 1/399 6/23/48

Samuel E. Cooper to daughter, Hallie Cooper
Simpson. Stone House and lot, known as the
"Rock of Ages", north side of High St., 532 W.
High, 10 garages and land connected with said
stone house.

APR 6/123 1/3/20

James E. Cooper to Samuel E. Cooper \$1,400.00.

APR 6/122 12/30/19

Florence H. Crane to James E. Cooper \$1,350.00.

JTD 28/75 7/29/13

Joseph S. Goldsmith to Florence H. Crane, \$1.00

JTD 28/70 7/29/13

Florence H. Crane and Henrietta O. Crane and
Alice L. Crane to Joseph Goldsmith, \$1.00 to each.

DCB 3/346 10/24/77

Samuel Houston Baker and Margaret T. Baker to
Sarah H. Crane, \$1,985.00. Sarah died and left
it to her 3 unmarried daughters.

JKH 3/426 2/4/63

Richard Hynson, Trustee of case of James S.
Sappington, Wm. S. Greenwood and Caroline Sappington
Greenwood vs. Margaret Sappington to Wm. H.
Hamilton, \$139.00.

JNG 4/251 5/31/36

Joseph Wickes to Wm. Sappington. Wickes is Trustee
of real estate of Thomas Edwards, deceased and
was appointed 11/3/1831. Wickes sold it on 12/3/31
to Thomas E. Palmer for \$457.25 and a decrees of
court transferred it to Sappington.

JNG 4/251

mentions that Edward Palmer sold it to Thomas
Edwards but there is no deed record of it.

BC 6/358 3/19/11

John Palmer to Edward Palmer, \$533.50. $\frac{1}{2}$ of lot
#62 and buildings.

EF 6/112 5/27/82

Henry and Sarah Hynson, Queen Annes County, to
John Palmer. £25 current money. #62 and house.

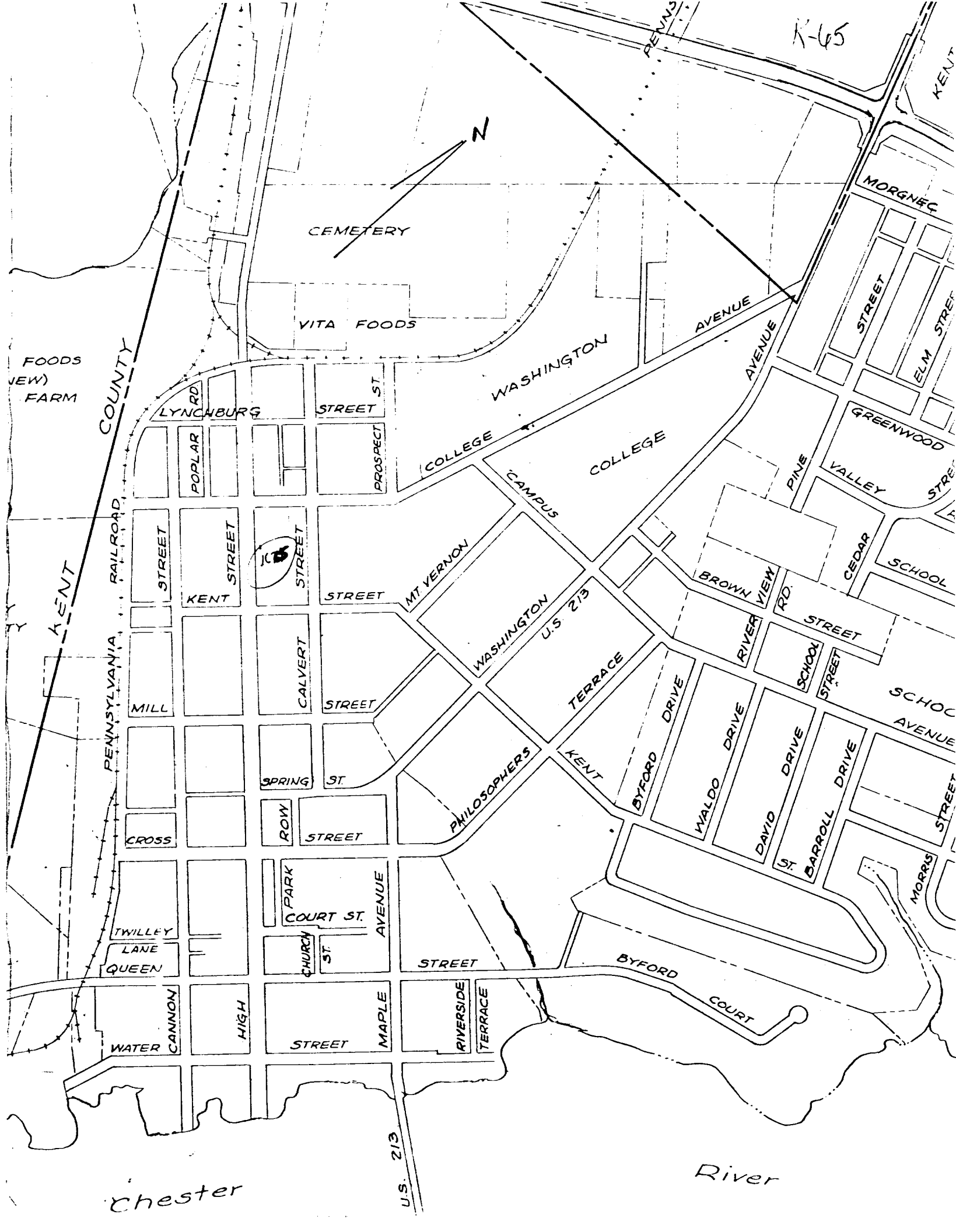
8/28 4/20/56

Abraham Everitt & Margaret to Mary Stanton. £20 sm.
Mary willed it, 4/2/1767 to Sarah Stanton Hynson.
mentions improvements.

4/709 8/?/37

Simon Wilmer to St. Leger & Abraham Everat, sons of
Joseph E., who paid £10 cm for #62. $\frac{1}{2}$ of #62 to
each.

K-65



KENT
PENNSYLVANIA
RAILROAD

FOODS
(NEW)
FARM

CEMETERY
VITA FOODS

N

Chester

U.S. 213

River

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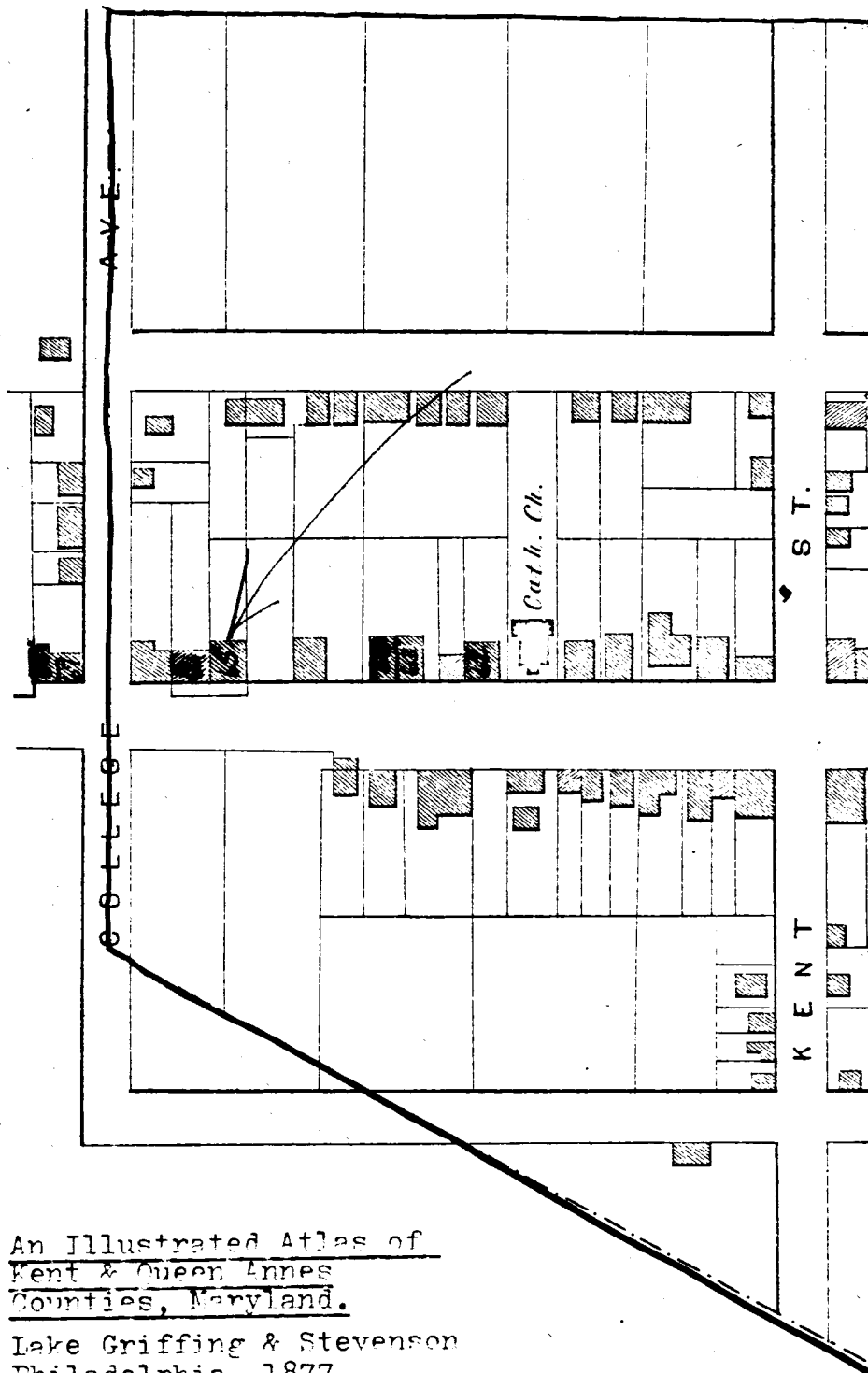
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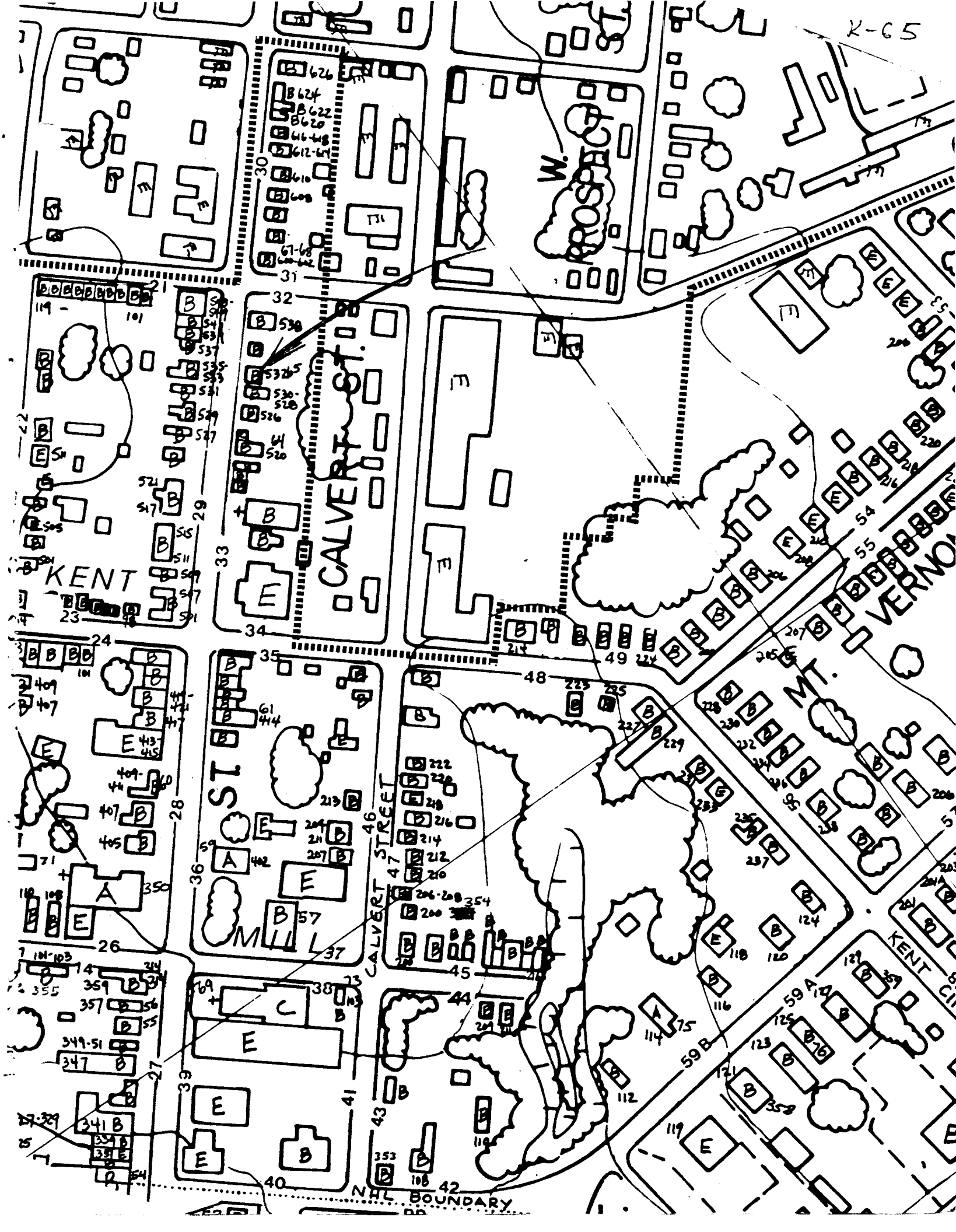
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 Res. 3 miles N. W. of Chestertown.
R. S. EMORY, Extensive Fruit Grower:
 Res. 1 mile South of Chestertown.

K-65



Prepared by MOB
 6/1/71

K-65





N 35 Rock of Ages
532 High

1/77 S + E



K 65 Rock of Ages
532 High

1/77 5



~~#77~~ Rock of Ages, 532 W High St.
K-65 note ring "attached to a shunting up to next house (536)"